Labour Ministers' Conference

252. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of State Labour Ministers was held recently in New Delhi at the initiative of the Central Government, to discuss, in depth, various urgent matters concerning labour, both organised and unorganised, in the country, to evolve a national consensus on vexed issues;

(b) if so, the details of the agenda discussed and policy decisions taken, agenda item-wise;

(c) the details of action plan formulated on implementation of labour policies/labour welfare schemes; and

(d) what are the issues on which no consensus could emerge and fresh efforts will have to made to evolve acceptable solution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) A conference of the State Labour Ministers was held on 7-8th July, 1997 to review the progress in the implementation of the directives of the Supreme Court on child labour, discuss the provisions of the proposed Central Legislation on Agricultural Workers and dual control on the administration of medical care in ESI Corporation.

The review of the implementation of the directives of Supreme Court on child labour revealed that the first phase of the survey on child labour in most of the States/UTs have been completed. The Child Labour Rehabilitation cum Welfare Fund is in the process of being constituted and in many cases employers of children in non-hazardous occupations have been issued notices for ensuring that no child is allowed to work for more than 6 hours a day and arrangements be made by them for at least 2 hours of education to children working in non-hazardous occupations. All the State Governments reiterated their commitment for the implementation of the directives of Supreme Court in letter and spirit.

In regard to the proposed central legislation on Agricultural Workers, representatives of State Govts., expressed different views. While the State Govt. of West Bengal Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Tripura, Kerala, Rajasthan, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Goa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman Nicobar islands, National Capital Territory of Delhi & Union Territory of Chandigarh supported the proposed legialation, the State Govt. of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat had certain reservations about it in view of the local conditions prevailing in those States.

The item on dual control on administration of medical care in ESI Corporation was briefly presented in the conference.

Agency for detecting child labour in Beedi sector

253. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the specific agency responsible for detecting employment of child labour in the beedi sector, alongwith the full details of that agency;

(b) the achievements of this agency during the period 1995-96 to 1996-97;

(c) the efforts being made to increase its activities in the current year; and

(d) the steps proposed to prevent employment of child labour in the beedi sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 the employment of children is prohibited in 7 occupations and 18 processes contained in Part A and